



## DEVOTIONAL TIME

12-08-2014 @ 0900

**"This 'Going' Thing is Tough!"**

Acts 9:26-30



### GOD REST YOU MERRY!

God rest you merry, Friends of God! Let nothing you dismay!

Prepare for Christ, our Savior to come this Christmas Day!

He's saved us all from bitter doubts when fears led us astray!

O! Tidings of Comfort and Joy! Comfort and Joy! O-o! Tidings of Comfort and Joy!

### Acts 9:26-30

"Saul went to Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples. But they would not believe that he was a disciple, and they were all afraid of him. Then Barnabas came to his help, and took him to the Apostles. He explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and that the Lord had spoken to him. He also told them how boldly Saul had preached in the Name of Jesus in Damascus. And so Saul stayed with them and went all over Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the Name of the Lord. He also talked and disputed with the Greek-speaking Jews, about they tried to kill him. When the believers found out about this, they took Saul to Caesarea, and sent him away to Tarsus."

### QUESTIONS FOR TODAY

- Have you ever wondered whether or not "God had called you" to a special work because nothing in your world was "going according to plan"? How did you handle "the unexpected"?
- Have you ever tried to testify to the "marvelous Grace of God", only have your "witness" just "blow up in your face" as people "ran for cover", turned their backs on you, or worse?
- What was it like to have an "advocate" arise, someone to "build a bridge" of communication for you at a time when the rest of the world seemed ready to "turn you off"?

There's a common misconception about "Christian Life": When you finally open heart and soul to the Lord, life gets to be a "tiptoe through the tulips"! Everything just falls into place, and the rest of your days are full of Grace and Gladness. In all the Scriptures, a "Godly Life" is anything but easy; check out either Testament...God's servants go from one challenge to another, each getting progressively complex and dangerous. Consider the patriarchs, any one of the judges, priests, prophets, or kings; ponder the Apostles, or other disciples, John the Baptist, Mary of Nazareth, or Joseph, her husband, even Jesus Christ Himself—who was utterly sinless, but was unjustly condemned, scourged, crowned with thorns, then crucified! Anyone who expects an "easy peezy" Gospel is in for a shock. The Word of God is quite clear: "The 'godly' will suffer in the world," and now Saul is off to great start—shunned by the fearful disciples, (who will not believe he's really changed,) and hunted by the Greek-speaking Jews, (who cannot refute his arguments, but are certain he is an even worse blasphemer than the ones he used to persecute!) Now notice that Saul perseveres, even when he has to "make himself scarce" by heading off to his hometown of Tarsus for a bit. "Quit" wasn't even in his vocabulary; he just went to a different location to "stop, drop, and seek" new guidance from the Lord. If one group rejected his offer, he knew enough to seek other opportunities to invite the "open-minded" and "willing-hearted" to accept the Gospel. Now the "ball is in our court"; we need to be willing to live with the fact that our witness will offend some who find the Gospel a "scandal" and/or a "folly" of apocalyptic proportions. Saul offered "the Word he had heard", even in the face of rejection. Jesus proclaimed "the coming of the Kingdom", no matter who it annoyed. God, grant us the Grace of Steadfast Trust! When the rest of the world seems ready to reject the Word we offer, strengthen us with Your Spirit of Truth and Love! It's Advent; Your Son is the "Reason for our Season"! As we sing the songs, wrap the gifts, and ready the treats, remind us to live the Word You call us to proclaim!